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The University of London greatly appreciates the opportunity to address this Meeting of States Parties. Our statement today addresses standing agenda items 2 and 3.

Mr Chairman, thank you for distilling the ideas and proposals from the Meeting of Experts into a helpful Synthesis paper. There are a number of points in the text where we would encourage the MSP to go further than the MX.

### **Standing Agenda Item 2: Review of Developments in Science and Technology**

On the review of science and technology, we note the Synthesis paper says “States Parties reiterated the value of continuing to consider, in future meetings, possible ways of establishing a more systematic and comprehensive means of review” (Section II.G paragraph 2).

We encourage this MSP to go further and recommend to the Eighth Review Conference that the best way forward is to establish an **Open Ended Working Group** (OEWG). This proposal has been gathering support, as was evident at the MX. We want to see it brought forward ready for 2016 by a wide range of States Parties crossing Group boundaries. They will need to show in some detail how an OEWG would provide “a more systematic and comprehensive means of review” than is possible under the present arrangement. More adequate allocation of time to each S&T development under review would be one benefit. Staff support possibly in the shape of a Scientific Secretary might be another, and this should be a priority within any expansion of the ISU. The more thoroughly the OEWG proposal is worked out, the better should be its prospects for success at the Review Conference.

This paragraph of the Synthesis paper recognises the importance of thoroughly and effectively reviewing S&T developments relevant to the Convention, of keeping pace with rapid changes in a wide range of fields, and exploring opportunities for enhanced cooperation and sharing of the technology identified by such reviews. All three of these aims would be better pursued in an OEWG.

States Parties at the MX discussed **gain-of-function work** and “agreed on the value of continuing to consider such developments in future meetings” (Section II.G paragraph 1). We would like the MSP to go further and endorse the US de facto moratorium on gain-of-function research that came into effect on 17 October 2014. We encourage the MSP to agree that States Parties carry out a comprehensive risk assessment to quantify the risks of release of gain-of-function viruses into the community in terms of loss of human life, costs to health care systems, financial and socio-economic costs, and liability costs. We also encourage the MSP to agree that States Parties identify and ban the specific types of experiments that should not be undertaken because of the disproportionately high risk they carry. National arrangements for oversight of gain-of-function work should take its implications for the Convention fully into account and should be documented in the annual CBM returns on Form E. Any gain-of-function work carried out as part of national biological defence research and development should be specifically identified and outlined in CBM Form A.

### **Standing Agenda Item 3: Strengthening National Implementation**

On Strengthening National Implementation, we hope this MSP will develop the Synthesis paper statement that “States Parties reiterated the value of continuing discussion on measures to strengthen national implementation of the Convention, including in light of various proposals made by States Parties” (Section II.G paragraph 2).

There are two things that could usefully be achieved this week. First, a Common Understanding that national implementation is closely bound up with confidence in compliance, so the two need to be pursued together, as strengthening the first benefits the second.

Second, Effective Action in terms of welcoming the transparency initiatives that several States Parties have pioneered in Compliance Assessment and Peer Review and recommending that other States Parties either join in such effective actions or find their own preferred methods of demonstrating transparency. No one is making exclusive claims for any one method but everyone can contribute their own. Whatever differences States Parties may have on the eventual compliance framework they want to see and how to move towards it, they should all be able to agree on the value of promoting transparency in national implementation. We encourage this MSP to go beyond the bare statement in the Synthesis and lay the foundations for progress in this area on which the Eighth Review Conference can build.

### **Side Event Announcement**

Mr Chairman, King’s College London will be launching a report on Confidence and Compliance at the lunchtime side event today. The report details a workshop King’s jointly organized with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy on the margins of the MX.

The side event will also be making the link between transparency and scientific research through a discussion of gain-of-function work. We are pleased to have two eminent speakers for you: Professor of virology Simon Wain-Hobson from the Pasteur Institute and Professor of epidemiology Marc Lipsitch from Harvard University.

You are all warmly invited to attend.

We thank you for your attention and we wish you a productive week.

### **Mr Nicholas Sims**

**Emeritus Reader in International Relations, London School of Economics & Political Science**

### **Dr Filippa Lentzos**

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\* The University of London dates from 1836, and is a major component of the higher education sector in the United Kingdom and beyond. It has evolved into a confederation of academically and financially autonomous colleges, which continue to share some central University of London institutions and a long history of joint endeavours in education and research. King’s College London (founded 1829) was one of the two original colleges of the University of London. The London School of Economics & Political Science (founded 1895) became a college of the University of London in 1900.